IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A method for producing an ethylene-vinyl alcohol copolymer resin composition, said method comprising:

(a) introducing into an extruder an ethylene-vinyl alcohol copolymer having a water content in a range 0.5-70 wt%, based on the total weight of water and copolymer, and melting said ethylene-vinyl alcohol copolymer having a water content;

(b) further introducing into said extruder a liquid component comprising an aqueous solution of a resin, an aqueous dispersion of a resin, an aqueous dispersion of inorganic fine particles having an average diameter of not more than 10 μm, or a mixture thereof;

(c) subjecting said melted ethylene-vinyl alcohol copolymer and said component to melt-kneading in said extruder; and

(d) discharging the resulting ethylene-vinyl alcohol copolymer resin composition from the extruder.

Claim 2 (Previously Presented): The method according to claim 1, wherein the liquid component is at least an aqueous solution of a resin which comprises a polyvinyl alcohol, an ethylene-vinyl alcohol copolymer, starch or a starch derivative, a cellulose derivative, a polyacrylic acid or a salt thereof, polyvinyl pyrrolidone, polyoxyethylene glycol, polyoxypropylene glycol, or a mixture thereof.

Claim 3 (Previously Presented): The method according to claim 1, wherein the liquid component is at least an aqueous dispersion of a resin which comprises a polyvinyl acetate-based emulsion, a polyacrylic ester-based emulsion, a polyurethane-based emulsion, an ethylene-vinyl alcohol copolymer emulsion, a latex, or a mixture thereof.

Claim 4 (Previously Presented): The method according to claim 1, wherein the liquid component includes a resin, and the aqueous solution of a resin or the aqueous dispersion of a resin has a concentration of the resin component ranging from 0.5 weight % to 70 weight %.

Claim 5 (Previously Presented): The method according to claim 1, wherein the liquid component includes a resin, and the amount of the resin added per 100 weight parts of the ethylene-vinyl alcohol copolymer is in the range from 0.1 weight parts to 200 weight parts.

Claim 6 (Previously Presented): The method according to claim 1, wherein the liquid component is at least an aqueous dispersion of inorganic fine particles which has a concentration of inorganic fine particles ranging from 0.1 weight % to 50 weight %.

Claim 7 (Previously Presented): The method according to claim 1, wherein the liquid component includes inorganic fine particles, and the amount of inorganic fine particles added per 100 weight parts of the ethylene-vinyl alcohol copolymer is in the range from 0.001 weight parts to 50 weight parts.

Claim 8 (Previously Presented): The method according to claim 1, wherein the liquid component includes inorganic fine particles, and the inorganic fine particles are selected from inorganic layered compound particles, silicon oxide particles, and mixtures thereof.

Claim 9 (Original): The method according to claim 1, wherein the ethylene-vinyl alcohol copolymer has an ethylene content ranging from 3 mol% to 70 mol% and a saponification degree ranging from 80 mol% to 100 mol%.

Claim 10 (Canceled).

Claim 11 (Previously Presented): The method according to claim 1, wherein the liquid component includes a resin, and the resin composition immediately after discharge from the extruder has a water content ranging from 5 weight % to 40 weight %.

Claim 12 (Original): The method according to claim 1, wherein the water content of the ethylene-vinyl alcohol copolymer in a melted state is adjusted in the extruder by feeding water to the extruder and/or removing water from the extruder.

Claim 13 (Original): The method according to claim 1, wherein the temperature of the ethylene-vinyl alcohol copolymer in the melted state is in the range from 70°C to 170°C.

Claim 14 (Original): The method according to claim 1, wherein the ethylene-vinyl alcohol copolymer resin is further kneaded in the extruder with at least one additive selected from a carboxylic acid, a boron compound, a phosphoric acid compound, an alkali metal salt and an alkaline earth metal salt.

Claim 15 (Original): A method for producing ethylene-vinyl alcohol copolymer resin composition pellets, wherein an ethylene-vinyl alcohol copolymer resin composition obtained according to a method as claimed in claim 1 is cut to form pellets and subsequently dried until the water content is reduced to 1 weight % or lower.

Claim 16 (Original): An ethylene-vinyl alcohol copolymer resin composition obtained by a method as claimed in claim 1.

Claim 17 (Canceled).

DISCUSSION OF THE AMENDMENT

Claim 1 has been amended by incorporating the subject matter of Claim 17 therein; Claim 17 has been canceled.

No new matter is believed to have been added by the above amendment. With entry thereof, Claims 1-9 and 11-16 will be pending in the application.